

SNOW AND ICE SEASON

Winter of 2020, 2021 is upon us!! The City of Clayton would like to ask the residents to please be aware of their driving conditions and offer a few simple solutions which could assist the city in its snow and ice operations.

As residents are aware, the city takes its snow and ice very seriously. The ODOT RWIS (Road and Weather Information System) is available for all local agencies. <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Operations/Traffic-Management/Pages/Weather-Management.aspx> Part of this system is an on-call meteorologist available 24 hours a day during winter events who can forecast snow and ice start times down by the minute. This allows the city to get the drivers in before the roads become too slick. Prior to a winter event, the Clayton Management Team develops a schedule based on this forecast information to schedule the crews accordingly.

All trucks are prepared and loaded with material prior to the event. This material consists of two products that assist the drivers in fighting the conditions. The first material is salt which all residents are familiar with. The second less familiar product is a mixture of salt brine and agricultural product which consist of beet product and natural calcium. This liquid is mixed at an 80/20 blend and is applied at the spinner to help the salt stay on the road and assist in the melting process. Salt alone will not melt ice, it needs either sun or traffic to break it down into a liquid form. By adding the liquid at the spinner, this decreases the melting time and allows the salt to stay on the road by reducing the scatter.



As the storm develops, drivers have several other tools at their disposal including the RWIS weather sensors installed in various locations throughout the county. You may have noticed these at every county line as you were driving through the state of Ohio. These sensors provide valuable information including surface temperature, road conditions, and sub-surface temperatures. This information along with in cab surface temperature gauges, allows the driver to apply the right material at the right time. When the surface temperatures and the subsurface temperatures are dropping fast, it is time to apply the material.



However, even with the best technology available to the city, there are several other factors to consider during an event. The city plows over 220 lane miles of roadway with only 9 full time employees. During a larger event, managers must utilize back-up drivers to assist with two shifts, so crews do not get too tired. This usually results in 5 drivers per shift to fight the storm. Drivers will concentrate on all the major roads first then get into the interior roads last. For example, Main street has 5 lanes to deal with which requires about 6 passes with a plow to get the center pushed out to the edges. Once roads are plowed, then the salt/liquid combination can be applied. The urban roads in the city can be a challenge at times for drivers because of parked cars, trash cans, basketball hoops and other objects in the road.



Rural roads have other challenges such as wind-blown areas that are very difficult to treat. Those areas can not be salted because the drifting snow only causes the ice to build deeper. These areas are very dangerous because you may have a large area of dry pavement followed by a large area of drifted snow and ice.

Drivers would like to remind all residents that you can assist them by keeping all cars in driveways during major events and even stagger parking on streets if possible. When two cars are parked as in the photos above, it is very difficult to maneuver a 10-foot plow between those cars. Additionally, tailgating plow drivers when they need to make several stops is very dangerous. At times drivers need to back up to tuck corners and clear intersections. Passing snow plows is also very dangerous because plows must clear centerlines first and it does not allow drivers to make safe passes. If you live in a cul-de-sac, please have patience because with fire hydrants, parked cars and driveways, there are little to no places to stack snow. These are very large trucks and do not have the mobility to maneuver like the small pick-up truck's contractors use. Additionally, drivers understand the frustration with cleaning driveways and having a city plow fill the end back up, but please do not push this snow back into the street. This could cause an accident. If you stack the snow on the right side of the drive as you are facing the road, then the driver will plow it away from your drive.



The city would like to remind residents that it is a very difficult task to clear the roads, but they take great pride in providing safer streets for the public. Please keep an eye on the weather and drive safe, and please “Don’t Crowd the Plow”. Help us help you.

The site below is very helpful to the traveling public. There is a travel and winter section.

<https://www.ohgo.com/>